

THE TARDY ASTER.

Little Bessie Berry was almost always late for school. She was almost always late for everything.

It wasn't because she had to run errands or mind the baby, but because she was an "In-a-minute" and a "Pretty-soon" and an "After-a-while" little girl who liked to dilly-dally better than anything else in the world.

There were some other children in Bessie's room who were often tardy, too, so the teacher began to wonder what she could do. And soon she thought of something. She went to the seedsman and bought some seeds. They were aster seeds, in paper packets.

"Listen, children!" said the teacher. "How many of you ever had a flower garden?"

Then the teacher said a nice thing. "These seeds are for you—one little packet for each one in this room."

Here Bessie raised her hand. "Please, may I pass 'em?"

But the teacher shook her head. "One for each one in the room," she went on, "who isn't tardy a single time this month."

That wasn't all. They would plant the seeds and after while have flowers. And then the seedsman would give a prize to the boy or the girl who had the finest flowers. It was really two prizes.

So the children looked at the seeds longingly and promised that they wouldn't be tardy one single time. And some weren't. But Bessie was—four times!

The next month was April, and the tardy ones tried again. Bessie was tardy twice. They were to try once more in May.

"Try, try, again," said Bessie's papa. So she tried again. And mamma helped. Every morning and afternoon she said "Seeds!" when she kissed her little girl good-bye. Bessie said "Seeds" over and over; all the way to school, and didn't dilly-dally once.

And on the last day of May she took a packet of seeds home. Bessie and her mamma planted them right off. They didn't dilly-dally about it at all. Bessie hoped she might win the seedsman's prize.

But it was late and dry, and the seeds didn't come up very quickly. Only one seedling grew. Papa called it a dilly-dally flower. It just wouldn't catch up with Clara Bell's across the street. But Clara Bell had won her seeds in March.

When the day for the flower show was nearly come, some of Bessie's friends had big blue and white asters in their gardens, and Bessie had one fine aster plant, with hard green knobs at the top.

Every morning she counted the days that were left, until at last a bit of white showed in one of the knobs. But then there was only one day left.

So everybody, even Bessie, knew that it would be a tardy aster, just as Bessie had been a tardy little girl.

When at last the day for awarding the prize came, it was a very, very sad Bessie Berry who stood in the back garden looking down at a tardy aster, while all of her little friends, with hands full of punctual asters, went to the flower show.

Wasn't it too bad? But it must have been a good lesson for Bessie, for she didn't dilly-dally any more.—
Little Folks.

A GAME WITH THE HYMNAL.

One evening the missionary's children in a far off island station were complaining that they did not know what to play.

"Can't you tell us something to do, papa?" said nine-year-old Virginia.

"Let me think a moment. Yes, I know of a fine game we can all play. If you get paper and pencils for us, we will go out to the dining room, sit around the table and begin at once."

"Oh, goody!" and Virginia ran to get paper and pencils.

When she came back father explained the new game. During the next two minutes we were to write the first lines of as many hymns beginning with the letter A as we could think of. Father was timekeeper and it seemed as if we had just gotten started when he said, "Time's up!" Then the youngest read what she had written. She had only the following four:

"A charge to keep I have."

"Abide with me, fast falls the eventide."

"Angels voices ever singing."

"Awake, my soul, and with the sun."

It happened that we all had thought of the first hymn she had, so we drew a line through it and it did not count. All but one of us had the next hymn, so that only counted one for those who had it. Virginia was, however, the only one of us who had remembered "Angels voices ever singing"; so as there were five of us playing, that hymn counted four for her; and as all but two had the last hymn we counted it two, thus giving Virginia seven credits thus far.

The rest of us read off the hymns we had thought of, then going on to those beginning with B and so on through the whole alphabet.

The evening went very quickly and it was bedtime before we had realized it. Since then the "hymn game" has been one of our favorites and we thought we should like to share it with a wider circle.

Naha, Loo Choo Islands, Japan. Anna Dale Schwartz.

A WISE MOTHER SAYS.

That we should keep up a standard of principles, for our children are watchful judges.

That what are trifles to us are often mountains to our children, and that we should respect their feelings.

That if you say, "No," you should mean "No." Unless you have a good reason for changing a command, hold it.

That we should take an interest in our children's amusements, for mother's share in what pleases them is a great delight.

That we should be honest with the children in small things as well as great; and if we can not tell them what they wish to know, we should say so rather than deceive them.

That many a child goes astray not because there is want of care and training at home, but simply because the home lacks sunshine; that a child needs smiles as much as flowers need the sunbeams.

That children look little beyond the present moment; that if a thing pleases they are quick to see it; that if home is a place where faces are sour, the words are harsh and fault-finding, they will spend as many hours as possible elsewhere.—Philadelphia Record.